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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

17th June 2011

Dealer : East Vul : N-S	NORTH ♠ K 8 7 6 3 ♥ J 10 5 ♦ 10 6 3 ♣ 8 2	
WEST ♠ Q J 10 9 2 ♥ 7 6 2 ♦ J ♣ A Q J 5		EAST ♠ A 5 ♥ 4 ♦ A Q 9 8 5 2 ♣ 10 7 6 4
	SOUTH ♠ 4 ♥ A K Q 9 8 3 ♦ K 7 4 ♣ K 9 3	

East	South	West	North
1 Diamond	1 Heart	1 Spade	Pass
2 Diamond	2 Heart	2 Spade	Pass
Pass	3 Heart	X	All Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♦

Many bridge players are reluctant to double partscore contracts lest the opponents wrap up a game by bringing home the bacon. That, in turn, has led to a rash of overbids going unpunished. That was not the case here.

By competing twice, vulnerable, facing a partner who had passed, South painted a perfect picture of his holding. Bidding a third time invited a double and West was happy to oblige.

Left in two spades, declarer would surely have fulfilled the contract despite the 5-1 split. Against three hearts doubled, West led the jack of diamonds. East overtook with the ace returned the nine, on which declarer followed low (East was marked with the queen) and West ruffed.

The nine of spades was ducked in dummy, but East rose with the ace to return another diamond for West to ruff. That completed the defensive book and, even though declarer was able to discard a club on dummy's king of spades, there were still club losers and the penalty was a healthy 500 points.

Note West's lead of the nine of spades at the third trick. Had West returned the queen, East might have ducked and the contract would have been defeated only one trick.

gorenbridge@aol.com